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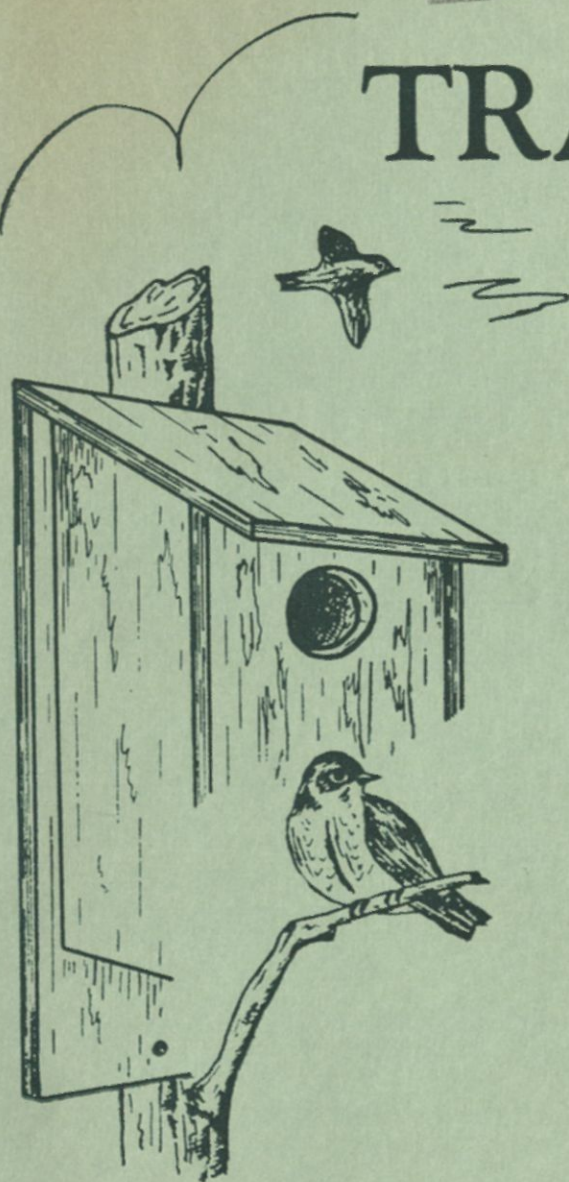
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PEQUOT

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TRAILS



Published Quarterly by the Pequot-Sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Incorporated
MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

The Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary

INCORPORATED
MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

CURATOR
WILLIAM WYLIE

A CONSERVATION PROGRAM OF EDUCATION AND RECREATION FOR
CHILDREN AND ADULTS

WHAT IS THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY?

The Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Connecticut for the purpose of promoting a community program of conservation education. The program includes work for the preservation and restoration of our natural resources.

It is a unique community enterprise in that it is supported entirely by interested citizens through memberships and contributions.

THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

Maintains 125 acres of land for the purpose of teaching others the ways and values of protection and restoration of our birds, wildlife and other natural resources.

Maintains a trailside museum and a series of nature trails which tell the story of nature in a most instructive and fascinating manner.

In cooperation with the schools, girl scouts, boy scouts, community centers and other youth organizations, promotes a program of conservation education for children.

Conducts a year around program of field trips and activities for members.

Operates a bird-banding station in conjunction with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and cooperates with state and local conservation agencies.

Through personal guidance of the Curator, serves as a source of information and help on local and national conservation problems.

Furnishes information relative to the value of conservation to many individuals and organizations through correspondence, the press, and lectures.

Pursues a long range development program that insures a permanent and increasingly beneficial service to all local communities.

PEQUOT TRAILS

Vol. XI

Spring 1959

No. 1

Annual Meeting Sunday, June 28, 1959

The annual meeting of the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc. will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 28, at the Trailside Museum. It is hoped by your officers and Curator that as many members as possible will attend this important annual meeting. The opening of the Trailside Museum in May, and the annual meeting in June are about the only contacts the Curator has with many of the Sanctuary members. For those members who have never attended either affair, a special invitation is extended so that your Curator may meet you. If at all possible come early and take time to walk through the trails of the Sanctuary; go into the Museum and see for yourself what you are supporting in the way of a physical plant set-up.

This is going to be an important meeting, as plans are going to be presented and discussed for a proposed new Trailside Museum-and-Auditorium building. These plans are just being formulated; so attend this meeting and get in on the ground floor.

The work of the past year will be heard in the Curator's annual report and plans for the future will also be out-lined. Your comments, suggestions and criticisms are always welcome.

Mr. Alfred M. Hawks, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Audubon Society, is presenting an illustrated talk, entitled "What Conservation Is." Mr. Hawks has spent his life time working in the field of natural science both in the class room and in the field, so this talk should be very rewarding.

Again, all members who can possibly make it are urged to attend this annual meeting of your Sanctuary.

The Second Year

By the time this issue of the **Pequot Trails** reaches you, your Curator will have completed his second full year at the Pequot-sepos. This second year has been a good year for your Curator, his wife and family. The one most memorable event of the year was the birth of our second child, Gay Avis, on February 17. She is four months old now and growing like the proverbial weed. She has yet to have her first sick day, so the Pequot-sepos seems to agree with her as it does with the rest of the Wylie family.

This past year has seen your Sanctuary used and visited more by adults and children than ever before. Rarely a day passed last summer or fall which did not see groups of children, garden clubs, or family groups at the Sanctuary. The Trailside Museum was visited by all of these groups, and many of the groups took the time to visit the Duck Pond, walk the Nature Trail, and explore the other trails and fields on the Sanctuary. Many of these groups have returned time and time again. This has been most gratifying to your Curator. Scouts of all ages have used your Sanctuary and have seemingly gotten a tremendous amount out of it. Conversely, the scouts have been a help on the Sanctuary in planting or transplanting trees and shrubs, clearing trails, and doing work in and around the Museum. Your Curator is merit badge counselor for several natural history badges and many of the requirements for these badges can be worked off as improvements on the Sanctuary.

The Sunday Nature Walks, which are firmly established by this time have been well attended. The morning walks in spring, summer and fall are popular and your Curator can see an improvement in the abilities and

PEQUOT TRAILS

Published quarterly, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, by the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc., Mystic, Conn.

A Statement of Purpose:

We want this publication to be of the utmost service to you—to keep you informed concerning activities at the Sanctuary and in your community; to invite your participation in these activities; and to provide you with general articles of education and inspiration regarding conservation subjects. Won't you drop us a line and tell us what you would like to see published? We would appreciate it.

William Wylie, Curator

Tel. Mystic JEfferson 6-9248

knowledge of those persons who regularly attend. It is certainly refreshing and rewarding to be on the trails and in the meadows of the Sanctuary in the early morning hours. The afternoon walks during late fall and throughout the winter were attended by many people, the groups ranging from six to over twenty, per Sunday. The winterizing and heating of the old carriage shed has made the big difference on these cold weather walks. Winter feeding of birds, trees and shrubs, ferns, and tracks are stressed on these winter walks.

As you will undoubtedly recall, your Curator taught six school classes during the winter of 1957-'58 for the Rhode Island Audubon Society. This past school year, your Curator taught fourteen school classes for the same Society. This teaching the past two years has brought in a much needed and rewarding financial return to the Pequot-sepos. However, your Sanctuary has now advanced to the point where this teaching will no longer be necessary. Your Curator freely admits that this teaching took up more time from Sanctuary duties than was permissible. The understanding is sought of those few people who came to the Sanctuary on certain days during the past year and found the Curator absent. The money received by the Sanctuary from

this teaching was considerable and is being put to good use.

The Trailside Museum received considerable attention and change during the winter of 1957-'58, so your Curator's efforts this past winter were focused more on the trails and grounds. All of the trails on the Sanctuary have been renamed and marked. Directional signs are out on the four major trails—the Nature Trail, the Owl, the Squirrel, and the Indian or Pequot Trail. It is virtually impossible now to become lost or confused on the Sanctuary trails. A large wooden Sanctuary trail map, two feet by three feet, has been prepared and put out at an appropriate place at the beginning of the trails near the museum. This large map eliminates the paper maps which were handed out to visitors, and this, in turn, eliminates a major litter problem on the Sanctuary.

Your Curator has been called upon, as usual, to give numerous slide talks and lectures to scouts, schools, garden clubs, and other organizations. This work is very enjoyable for your Curator and it is hoped that in the future more time can be devoted to this type of activity. Many people can be reached in this manner which could not be contacted in any other way.

It has been a busy year at the Pequot-sepos for your Curator and his family. The mid-winter slack, which has been rumored, never occurred. This Sanctuary, the Pequot-sepos, is growing by leaps and bounds. More and more activities are taking place, and we are becoming known in an ever widening circle as evidenced by the distant groups contacting your Curator for trips and lectures.

This is your Sanctuary. Only through your continued support and cooperation can this Sanctuary exist, and continue to function in its service to the community. We have here a unique endeavor—a Sanctuary supported entirely by interested people — without one cent of tax money from any source. With your continued cooperation this endeavor can develop into a guide or pattern for other communities to follow.

Museum Opening Was Well Attended

Sunday afternoon, May 17, marked the official opening of the Trailside Museum to the public, with approximately 100 adults and children attending. Visitors were welcomed by Curator William Wylie; many from Mystic and neighboring towns, while some came from Norwich and West Hartford.

Despite occasional showers, many people toured the Sanctuary trails; in particular the Nature Trail, which has been recently plotted and marked by our Curator. Great interest was shown in the birds that are being doctored or cared for by Bill: the injured least bittern, a pair of chukar partridges and the pair of great horned owls.

Within the Museum, exhibits were studied while the children enjoyed the electric identification games. The "Trading Post" had a wide variety of items pertaining to nature on display for purchase.

To enhance the official opening, hot coffee for the adults and soda for the children, together with cookies, and pastries, were served. Mrs. Malcolm D. MacGregor (President of the Sanctuary board of trustees) was in charge of the refreshments. She was assisted by Mrs. David Kellems, Mrs. Robert P. Anderson, and Mrs. Richard O. Harrington. During refreshments, the setting was completed as visitors watched such birds as the chickadees, purple finches, and white-breasted nuthatches come to feed at the Museum's window feeder.

The Trailside Museum will now remain open to the public daily except Mondays through October 15.

Our Grateful Appreciation

The large wooden trail map which will direct you as you begin walking the Sanctuary trails, was expertly drawn and painted by Miss Delia Snell. We are most grateful to Miss Snell for this fine piece of work.

Mr. Wilson D. Domer, of Stonington, has been giving of his time to do tedious painting chores to relieve Mr. Wylie for more pressing work. The Curator is especially grateful for his help.

Quite a few plants and wild flowers, not previously growing on the Sanctuary, have been given to the Pequot-sepos by Mr. Walter J. Moran, Mr. William Linke, and others, from their own properties. Thanks again for the fine contributions.

The Pequot-sepos has been fortunate in being able to take advantage of the talents and generosity of Mrs. Irving Bourque, who has painted, in accurate color, the very fine bird pictures appearing on many of our Nature Trail signs throughout the Sanctuary. Our sincere appreciation to Mrs. Bourque.

Pequot Trails

Adopt New Look

It is hoped by your Board of Trustees and Curator that the membership at large will find the new format of the Pequot Trails to their liking. This change has been made for several reasons.

First, the Pequot-sepos is an expanding organization and a booklet form of publication seems much more suitable and desirable than the old News Letter form. It can be expanded, in the future, to contain more pages, and ultimately, to include longer articles of a more varied and interesting nature.

Next, the cover of the Pequot Trails now contains most of the information formerly found only in the old Sanctuary Publicity Folder. A membership blank is included in the cover, as well as a map of New London County showing the exact location of the Pequot-sepos.

Taking all things into consideration, the Pequot Trails is now serving you as a quarterly news letter of Sanctuary activities; a publication of far reaching interest on conservation subjects; a publicity folder; a location map to direct people to the Sanctuary; and a calendar of Sanctuary activities. You will also find that this new form lends itself to more convenient reference.

Summer Field Trips Planned

Your Curator has been more than pleased with the response to the Spring and Fall series of Saturday morning field trips to near by points of local interest. These early morning trips have been aimed primarily at different types of bird life. It has now been decided to try three Summer trips this year to see how well they will be attended. If these trips work out well and prove to be popular with our members, more extensive trips will be planned for future Summers. Any suggestions of interesting places to visit will be welcomed by the Curator.

There are two places of local interest and one distant point which will be visited this summer. These three trips are as follows:

**FRIDAY, JULY 10, PACHAUG STATE
TREE NURSERY, VOLUNTOWN,
8:00 a.m.**

Tree nurseries are interesting places to visit as well as being educational. Many species of trees and shrubs are raised from seed at the Pachaug Nursery and these are available to Connecticut residents at a nominal price. The trip will organize at the Sanctuary parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Others planning to join the trip may meet the group at 8:45 at the Post Office in Voluntown. The group will return to the Sanctuary before noon.

**FRIDAY, JULY 31, STATE TROUT
HATCHERY, PERRYVILLE, R. I.,
8:00 a.m.**

Everyone interested in the outdoors should visit a fish hatchery at some time. It will not be possible to see the entire story at this time of year, but trout of several species and all ages can be observed close at hand. Learn the problems, head-aches, and rewards of operating a hatchery. Visit a hatchery once, and you will be compelled to return many times. This trip will leave the Sanctuary parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Those of you in the R. I. area can join the trip at the hatchery

which is on U. S. No. 1 opposite the Perryville Baptist Church. Perryville is about half way between the Charlestown Airport and Wakefield, R. I.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, PLUMB IS-
LAND, MASS. 6:00 a.m.**

The beaches of Plumb Island and Newburyport, Mass., are some of the best birding spots along the Atlantic coast. A small unofficial Sanctuary group visited this area late last summer and found it quite rewarding. Shore birds, of course, will be the main interest on this trip. The trip is a long one, so an early start is necessary. We will leave the Sanctuary parking lot at 6:00 a.m. We want to take as few cars as possible, so let's all meet here. It will be helpful if you will call the Curator and make advance reservations for this trip. A box lunch and beverage will be in order. The group should return to the Sanctuary at about dark.

The President Speaks

The Sanctuary wishes to express its thanks to the Westerly Gardeners, The Groton Garden Club, The Spade and Trowel Club of Groton, The Mystic Garden Club, and the Stonington Garden Club, all who have volunteered to man the Trailside Museum and Trading Post each week Tuesdays through Fridays, giving our Curator more freedom to take on any extra activities that may occur.

We also wish to thank Mrs. Eunice Whitney, our former president, who has taken over four Thursdays. We are anxious to learn whether full time attendance may promote enough interest so that perhaps another year we can have a full time paid attendant. Any suggestions from our volunteers will be greatly appreciated.

We want to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Norman Lamb for so generously giving us shrubs to plant around our small building, and the bird bath near the Museum. This has already made an improvement in the looks of the Sanctuary.

Things That Make Us Proud Department

With the exception of putting up nesting boxes and maintaining winter feeding stations, there are very few physical changes possible on a sanctuary which will bring almost immediate results. I made such a change on the Pequot-sepos last spring, and the results have been most rewarding.

There are two main permanent ponds on the Sanctuary. One is the old Quarry Hole and the other is the rather recently constructed Duck Pond. A problem concerning these two ponds became quite apparent to me my first summer here. The problem was this. The Quarry Hole, which was absolutely alive with small fish, averages twelve to fourteen feet in depth and the fish were not available to wading birds such as herons and egrets. The Duck Pond, which is quite shallow, under four feet in the deepest place, was almost devoid of fish. More simply stated, the pond in which herons could wade contained no food, while the pond with ample food was too deep for wading. What to do? Very simple! During March and April of 1958, I trapped from the Quarry Hole upwards to a thousand golden shiners and blue-gills and stocked them in the Duck Pond. This was done before the fish had spawned. These fish then spawned in the Duck Pond during the summer of 1958. A census was taken, with a minnow trap, this spring and the Duck Pond was found to contain a good population of the two species previously stocked. Now, I sat back to wait the final results. They were not long in coming.

Several great-blue herons arrived on the Pond the middle of April, and at least one of them can be seen there at almost any time of day or night. The first of June an American (common) egret found the Pond and has stayed almost constantly since that time. (Heron had been seen on the Duck Pond before this stocking, probably after frogs, but they stayed only for a short while.) A pair of kingfishers are now fishing here daily, some-

thing which was not possible before. The fish are still multiplying, and I sincerely hope that the herons will become increasingly more common.

Curator Comments

Well another spring migration has been completed, and that is about the best that can be said for it. In most respects it has been one of the poorest migrations that I have ever had to suffer through. There have been some bright spots, but they have been few and far between.

Land birds, with a few exceptions, seem to be down in numbers this year. It is gratifying, though, to find phoebes back this year in some numbers, after being completely absent from this area last season. There are nowhere near the normal number of phoebes yet, but they are definitely on the increase.

I have never seen robins as numerous as they are this spring. Not only are robins nesting in every conceivable spot where you might expect to find them, they are also nesting in the woods in the habitats of oven-birds, black and white warblers, and crested flycatchers. It has been my observation so far this spring, in this area at least, that robins are laying no more than two or occasionally three eggs. Is it possible that the robins' territories are so reduced in size that they feel incapable of finding sufficient food to raise normal broods? This is something to think about at least.

Baltimore orioles are overly common this spring, as are brown thrashers, towhees, and house wrens. When certain birds are so common that the average person on the street comments on their numbers, you know that they are way up in numbers.

While these land birds just mentioned are overly common this spring, there are other birds which are conspicuous by being almost totally absent. Most of the birds lacking in numbers seem to be deep woods birds. Birds which are normally taken for granted are hard to find this year. Red-eyed vireos and oven-birds, while they do occur, are very low in numbers. I have led

many trips through the woods this past month on which we were fortunate to hear even one oven-bird or vireo. Black and white warblers are also low in numbers this season. Chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers are scarce, but then, they have been all winter and this was explained, to the best of my ability, in the last issue of the **Pequot Trails**.

As for transient warblers, thrushes, and other birds this spring, many of them were not observed at all. The ones which were observed were observed infrequently. Blue-grey gnatcatchers occurred in good numbers again this spring as they did last, but very few of them have stayed in this area as nesting birds. I, for one, would like to know where they are going.

I am not going to try and explain this scarcity of birds at this time. I have not had the time to check the wintering areas of these birds to see if scarce species all wintered in the same general area or not. It would be logical, in this day, to try to explain it as the aftermath of the wholesale use of insecticides and herbicides, but it can not be certain that this is the case. It is something to ponder though. More will be said on this subject in this column next issue if more facts come to light.

As for shore birds this year, they seemed to be more common than usual. Of course, an effort is made only once or twice during the spring to observe shore birds, and going after them so infrequently, we could hit a good day or a poor one. (This is not so of the land birds, as they can be observed at all times under normal working conditions.)

There were three to four hundred black brant at Napatree Point this spring on April 18, where there have been less than a hundred on previous occasions. Over a hundred brant were observed there as late as May 23. Willets were also seen on Napatree Point on April 18, and these birds are not common here at any time. Purple sandpipers were more numerous than usual this spring, as were black-bellied plovers and ruddy turnstones.

In summing up the bird population this spring, I would suggest that shore birds, and song birds which live around our houses and brushy areas, are up in numbers, while birds of the deep woods are definitely down, some of them completely missing. This could be true of this very limited area, or I could be in error due to insufficient time in the field. I am basing this difference on past years and the situation just seems to be this way this year.

Housing Shortage

Thanks to Mr. Lawrence Brooks of Stonington, a serious problem for the Sanctuary purple martin colony has been avoided, actually before the birds realized it existed. The summer of 1957 saw the 16 room martin house about half filled. Last summer, 1958, every room in the house was occupied by martins. This coming season would have presented a real problem to the birds, in the housing department. Mr. Brooks saw the problem in advance and came to the rescue. We now have a 24 room martin house, which should suffice for at least this season. Next year? Well, who knows! Possibly a second house can be built and erected on the other side of the parking lot and the colony continue to grow. Martins, our largest swallow, are desirable birds to have around, and it is possible that neighbors or other people in the Mystic area will erect houses for our overflow.

Pequot-sepos Site For Botanical Trip

The Connecticut Botanical Society, Inc., has chosen the Pequot-sepos Sanctuary as the site for its June 21 field trip. The trip will begin from the Sanctuary parking lot at 10:30 a.m. It is hoped by your Curator that woodland and wet-lands plants can be stressed. This field trip will be open to the general public, so all those wishing to attend, please do so. The trip will extend into the afternoon so it is suggested that all persons bring a box lunch and beverage.

A Layman's Botanical Guide Books You Should Know About

The identification and study of plants—botany—is a fascinating hobby. Anyone who has ever delved into this study to any degree at all, knows that good books, complete in their coverage, yet written in a layman's language, are almost impossible to find. Such a set of books as just mentioned is being published by West Virginia University. This set, entitled "Flora of West Virginia" is being published in four volumes. This botanical work starts with the ferns and comes up through the flowering plants indigenous to West Virginia. What the "Mountain State" lacks in latitude, it more than makes up in altitude. This work will include most of the plants of Connecticut, in fact, most of those in New England, except for those requiring a salt water or brackish water environment.

Three volumes have been printed, to date, and the fourth and last volume should be out soon. This set is selling for one dollar per volume and can be obtained by sending a check for three dollars to the West Virginia University Book Store, Morgantown, West Virginia. You will receive the three volumes by return mail and be automatically notified when the fourth volume is published.

Don't miss out on this chance to get these books. The completed work will contain over a thousand pages, cover some two thousand species of plants, and will be completely illustrated.

Duck Pond Living Up to Its Name

The Sanctuary Duck Pond is living up to its name more and more as each year goes by. My first season here, the summer of 1957 I purchased eight four week old mallard ducklings. These birds were reared in an enclosure on the Duck Pond and finally released. Naturally, they have stayed more or less around. I have not made any attempt to capture and keep these ducks inside during the winter months. When the Sanctuary ponds freeze these

ducks leave for the bays and more open bodies of water.

Last spring, one mallard, to my knowledge, successfully raised a brood on the Duck Pond. Others of these same original ducks nested on the adjoining farm. This spring, on Thursday, May 7 to be exact, two broods of newly hatched mallards appeared on the Pond within a few hours of each other. One brood contained twelve ducklings while the other one had thirteen. Mortality has been about normal in these broods, and both broods have been observed almost daily.

I feel that this Pond will become more attractive to ducks, of several species, as the pond itself matures. (The Duck Pond is new, being excavated in the fall of 1952.) The area immediately around the pond is growing up to brush and is providing excellent nesting cover.

It will be interesting to watch this pond mature, the surrounding area grow up, and the wildlife respond to the ever changing environment.

The Trailside Museum has two live copperheads on display. If you are confused about what this snake really looks like, here is your chance to find out.

The barn swallow, which nests commonly around our houses, winters as far south as Brazil.

There are only fourteen species of snakes found natively in all of New England.

The word minnow is the name for a family of fish. Goldfish, shiners, and carp are three well known members of this family.

The eggs of the bull frog, which have been laid within the past two weeks, will not develop into frogs until the late summer of 1960.

Robin eggs require fourteen days to hatch.

The female American toad may lay as many as four thousand during the spring mating season.

TRADING POST

THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS, AT PRESENT, OF INCREASING YOUR SANCTUARY INCOME. ONE IS THROUGH ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIPS, AND THE OTHER IS THROUGH TRADING POST SALES. SUPPORT YOUR SANCTUARY BY PATRONIZING THE TRADING POST.

TRADING POST HOURS

Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CLOSED MONDAY

Stationery and Note Paper	\$1.00
Golden Nature Guides	1.00
Children's Games	1.00
Carved Animals	\$.20 to 3.50

Audubon China:

Cups	1.00
Saucers	1.00
Salad Plates	1.00
Dinner Plates 8" (Round or Square)	2.00
Dinner Plates 10"	2.25
Bird Tiles	2.00

Bird Houses

House Wren	1.50
Bluebird or Tree Swallow	2.00

Bird Feeders (after August 15th)

PLUS ASSORTED ITEMS

YOU AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Members, now totaling over 600, reside in eighteen states and the District of Columbia.

Membership is open to everyone. The present membership includes both amateurs and professionals in natural history subjects and many who recognize the Sanctuary's educational influence in community life.

Four members are elected to the Board of Trustees annually to serve for terms of five years each. The Officers of the Sanctuary are elected annually by the Board of Trustees.

BECOME A MEMBER OR GIVE NOW! On the bottom of this page you will find a form for your membership application or contribution. All memberships include a subscription to our quarterly bulletin, *Pequot Trails*, and have the privilege of participation in all scheduled events.

TAKE AN ACTIVE PART! Opportunities will be offered for participation in field trips, Sanctuary visits, committee work and many other activities.

HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY to affiliate now with an organization actively engaged in the promotion of a worthy community program of conservation education and recreation.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary

Mystic, Connecticut

Date

Please enroll me as a member of the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary for the year ending
19..... I enclose payment for the class of membership checked below.

☐ Regular: \$5.00 annually

☐ Organization: \$10.00 annually

☐ Patron: \$50.00 annually

☐ Sustaining: \$25.00 annually

☒ Contributing: \$10.00 annually

☐ Life: \$100.00

Corporation or Industrial Annual Contribution \$.....

Signed

M.....

(PLEASE SIGNIFY WHETHER MR., MRS., OR MISS)

Permanent Mailing Address

Please make checks payable to "P.S.W.S., Inc." and mail to The Pequot-sepos Wildlife
Sanctuary, Mystic, Connecticut

Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

Mystic, Connecticut

Miss Hazel A. Johnson
Connecticut College Library
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